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Pulpit Preaching

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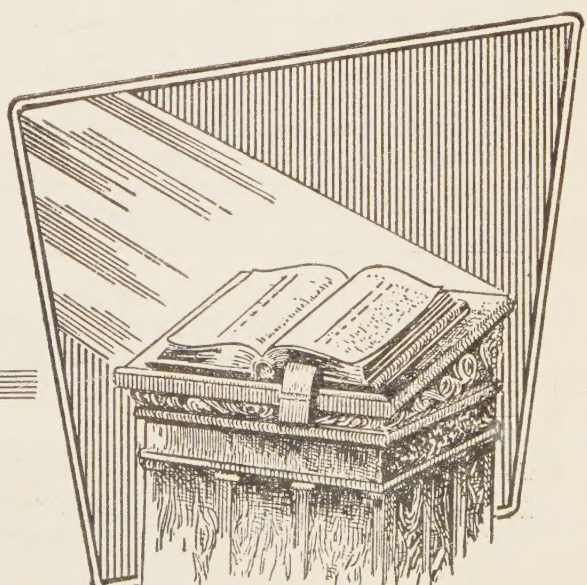

A PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL
FOR MINISTERS

Editorial Comments

"Great Words of Faith: Salvation," this month's initial theme, is the first in a series which will be continued from time to time during the next eighteen months. The month's second topic, "Table of the Lord," is a series of communion meditations by Dr. Lowell M. Atkinson.

The October themes will be "Antidote for Anxiety" and "Thanksgiving Day." The November subjects will be "The Heart of Christmas" and "Day of Beginnings." The December topics will be "Great Words of Faith: "Love" and 'Life in Christ."

———o———

Books For Pulpit Preaching

Two new books of sermons by pastors who are well-known to readers of this Journal have been recently published. *For Our Age of Anxiety* by R. Lofton Hudson contains fourteen sermons on basic Christian beliefs. The title-sermon is an especially meaningful exposition of Psalm 23. Other sermon titles are 'The Courage of Imperfection," "Looking at Life as a Whole," "Why Do Good People Suffer" and "Humanity Is Still a Virtue." Dr. Hudson's sermons are alive with pertinence and full of fresh illustrative materials from a wide range of sources: poetry, psychology, old and recent books, and personal experiences and observations. They radiate biblical understanding and insight. (Broadman, 160 pp., $2). *Salute Thy Soul* by the late Clarence E. Macartney shows his skill as homiletician and as a Bible expositor. Here thirteen textual sermons, concerning the salvation of man's soul, reveal the reasons why Dr. Macartney is one of the widely read pastors of our time. The sermons contain an eloquent simplicity, an evangelistic passion and convincing sermonic structure and development. (Abingdron, 144 pp., $2).

The Face of My Parish by Tom Allen is the story of a program of parish evangel-

(Continued on page 21)

Worth Quoting

Edited by E. Paul Hovey, the Federati
Churches, Lewiston, Idaho

Seeing God in the commonplace is bett
than waiting for him in a miracle.—Foy
Smith.

* * *

Let a child draw his first breath in
house which is a sanctuary; let him come
know by his quick childish perceptions th
there is in his home a ladder set up fr
earth to heaven, and that the angels of G
go up and down on it; let him feel the I
vine atmosphere in his face, the air all s
fused with heavenly light, the sweetness a
the calm which prevail in a place where
constant communion is maintained—and
after years he will be aware of voices whi
call, and hands which reach out of him fr
childhood, connecting him with heaven, a
even the most convincing negations of unb
lief will be powerless to shake the fai
which is deep as the springs of his life.
Walter W. Moore in *Religion in the Home.*

* * *

Some people think they are defending t
faith when they are only fighting in beha
of their own opinions.—Roy L. Smith.

* * *

A great deal of confusion has arisen b
cause people have . . . thought that belief
the Christian God did away with myste
The view of the world that the Bible pr
sents is not that of a floodlit stage, whe
all is clear and sharply defined. Rather,
is that of a world of mystery, wonderf
and bewildering, where, out of darkness a
shadows and confusion of tongues, a lig
shines and a voice speaks. The light is s
ficient to illuminate our path and the voi
is clear enough to give essential directio
but darkness remains around the path, a
no words are wasted in trying to expla
many baffling things about life. The lig
is one that men, having eyes, can fail
see, and, when God speaks, his voice is o

(Continued on page 25)

Pulpit Preaching

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s Conversion Necessary to Salvation?

ENSWORTH REISNER, First Methodist Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Repent ye, therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out.—Acts 3:18

There is a dreadful heresy abroad in the nd—that we can save ourselves and the orld if we will only learn enough and work ard enough. Years ago a young man walked ut of a prayer meeting convinced that the d time religion was a fraud. He had at-nded three weeks of revival services. He ad heard the preacher. He had seen many eople walk forward and kneel at the altar. n the closing day the church was crowded, ne mourner's bench full. Old Tom, the town runkard, had come to the altar weeping. mens and hallelujahs had come from the hole congregation. For a couple of days ne town quieted down. Prayer meeting came round. Of all the new converts only Old om had come to prayer meeting. The pil-rs of the church proceeded to freeze him ut and told him he wasn't wanted. Words gilt letters over the pulpit in the little hurch read: "Repent ye and be converted." o wonder the boy had flung himself out of ne prayer meeting convinced that the old me religion was a fraud.

I

The experience of this young boy has been n all too common experience to those mod-rn minds who have rejected the conversion xperience of their forefathers and devoted emselves to education and hard work. How-ver, if there were hypocrites in the old me religion we have gone to the other ex-eme and developed heretics in modern re-gion. Several months back I attended a TA program on mental health. Good mamas nd papas listened avidly to the words of isdom as they came from the mouth of a ading psychiatrist. The man was learned nd what he said almost any modern per-on at first glance would be prone to agree ith. He said: "Mental health is the re-onsibility of parents. They must under-and their children. They must teach them ot to duplicate their own mistakes. This is ne only way in which we can avoid an-her generation of delinquents." Words of isdom, indeed. The only trouble is that ne parents themselves do not know what their mistakes are. They don't understand themselves completely, much less their children. The education which they could give to their children is impregnated in their own delinquency.

The theory that we can bring salvation, or mental health, or whatever you wish to call it, by means of knowledge and hard work is sheer foolishness. In so doing we accomplish little more than pass on our own frailties. Neither an individual nor a nation can win its salvation by knowledge and hard work. There must be an added activator, something that converts the adult who is charged with the responsibility of the child.

There was an ancient theory in theology which said that sin was inherited; that "the sins of the fathers were visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation" and even beyond. This is the idea that we were born in sin. There is a grain of truth to this metaphor and although I cannot believe that God ordained all people to eternal perdition, still the underlying spiritual truth of that story is probably accurate. Humanity does seem to inherit a propensity for sin. Or, if you will, we adults pass our sins to our children and they in turn pass it on. The mere fact that we live in a social grouping, in a family, means that the contagion of sin is transferred even as a contagion of the common cold may be transferred. Therefore, one of the major problems of human life is how to break out of this socratic cave of sin, of evil, of mistakes, of immaturity. It is my contention that man cannot do this by himself alone. The most that he can do is repent and then allow himself to be changed; to be converted. "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out so that there may come from the presence of the Lord seasons of refreshing."

II

A very fine church woman asked for an interview one day. For three quarters of an hour she talked about her fine family background, her years in Sunday School and de-

votion to the church. She had done everything that was required of a cultivated church person. She had read extensively. She had taken special courses in Bible. She had assumed responsibility, led devotions, given liberally of her money. I couldn't understand what this was all leading to until she said, "Tell me, pastor, does a person have to be converted in order to enter the kingdom of heaven?" Then I understood. The rich young ruler had asked Jesus the same question. She was asking the question that hundreds of people have asked. My answer to her was "yes" for she had never been. She, like the rich young ruler, was too proud of her own position. All of her spiritual life had been the result of her own cultivation and that of her parents. I later understood how desperate was her question because she wanted to be good, but she couldn't. When the thin veneer of her cultured background was ripped off it revealed a cold, calculating woman desiring power. Her religion instead of cleansing her soul only compounded her sin.

Jesus talked about these kind of people and said they were like "whited sepulchers filled with dead men's bones"; all painted up on the outside, attractive the surface but filled with putrefaction inside. That is our modern heresy. And it is just as dangerous as the hypocrisy of the old time religion. Indeed, we do need conversion if we are to win salvation for ourselves individually or for our nation as a whole. "Repent ye, and be converted."

Dr. E. Stanley Jones asked this question, "Are you part of the problem of the universe, or are you part of the answer?" Therein lies the crux of the question. A number of times I have discussed the atomic theory of the atonement which seems to me to be a very apt description of our present world situation. We as human beings are so like the unstable atom! When we have been brought together in close proximity to each other we, like the wild unstable atom, tend to go into a chain reaction ending in destruction. It is this tendency to sin, to be part of the chain reaction of human evil, which is referred to by some people as original sin.

In an average person this tendency causes no great harm until he is brought into a position where his life affects the lives of many others who in turn react to his sinfulness with their counter sin, compounding it. This is exactly what is done in an atomic explosion. The unstable or sinful acts do no great harm until they are brought into a position where their instability compounds the instability of other similar atoms. Thu we have the bomb, the destroyer, which is a accurate a physical symbol of Satan as w can conceive of.

On the other hand, we have the creativ atomic pile, the breeder pile, which gener ates power, which creates activated mate rials for the healing of the people. Therei lies the difference between the wild ator of the atomic explosion and the creativ atom of the atomic pile. But what is it tha causes this difference; that converts th wild atom into a controlled constructiv atom? It is the reactor rod. What does th reactor rod do? It absorbs the excess insta bility of the wild atomic particles just a God absorbs the excess sin of our wild na tures. But when this reactor rod is place in such a creative atomic pile a certai number of the atoms therein emulate th reactor rod. They, likewise, absorb the wil particles of their neighboring atom as the put forth creative energy. They breed gooc the life-giving products. Such atoms ar part of the answer of the atomic worl where the mere wild atom which ends i chain explosion remain only a problem.

III

What makes the difference? The differ ence is made by the atom being dependen upon and identified with the absorbing roc the reactor rod. In exactly the same manne whether we are a part of the problem o the universe or a part of the answer of th universe depends upon whether we emulat the reactor rod of God—the cross of Chris We must take up our cross and follow hin It is this that converts us, blots out our ex cessive instability and turns us from destruc tion to creation.

In the atomic pile an atom which is crea tive differs very little from an atom whic is destructive, but the end result of its lif is totally different. Likewise, the individua who is part of the kingdom of God, who ha repented and been converted, differs ver little from the individual who is merely par of the destructive forces of sin. But that li tle difference is the difference of life an death, of perdition and salvation.

An illustration of this was brought vigor ously to my attention by a friend who too a group of youth on a caravan trip behin the iron curtain a couple years ago. He tol of the astounding story of how the Polis people as a whole had been turning awa from Lutheran and Catholic church ties be cause neither of these churches did much t resist the nazi effort to destroy their cour try. Instead the Poles were turning to th

ıly church which had been at work in their ıuntry, namely the Methodist. The people Poland are becoming Methodist by the ındreds and thousands. Once he met with group of M.Y.F. leaders, some of the most illiant young people in the country. One rl worked in the communist party headuarters in Warsaw. Finally she was asked, How can you be a follower of Christ and ill work for the communists? Won't they y to destroy you?" To which she replied, "Where I can work and testify for my Christ, I will continue to do. My father, my mother, my brothers and my uncle have all been killed and if they kill me for my Christ's sake that's all right too." You see she had become part of the answer, she had repented and been converted and was ready and willing to share in Christ's cross. That is neither hypocrisy or heresy, but the one final answer to human sin.

'he Good News of Sin

CHARLES GERLINGER, First Congregational Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.—John 1:8-9.

You will wonder at the strange title to ıis sermon. But there is a good reason for ıtting it thus. If we are not sinners, if the ıil in this world is not the direct result of ır rebellion against God and the breaking his law, if sin is merely an evolutionary erhand, the survival of the beast in us, if is but the mark of the growing up in the ıman race, or, if it is mere ignorance, then e are not responsible for it, and what is ore, we can do nothing much about it, and e are caught in a well nigh hopeless chain events. If man is not a sinner, he is a vicm. If we have not broken God's laws and ıus have brought judgment upon ourselves, ıen the world is what it was meant to be or hat it could not help being, and it is just o bad for us; we are caught in a ruthless achine.

But if we are sinners, and the evil in the orld is at least in large measure the result our rebellion, then there is room for reıntance and forgiveness, room for a new art in life, room for the prodigal to return ome in a great new discovery of the ather's love. The Gospel of the Cross, the ospel of the redemption of man by the race of God, presupposes man's sin. If sin not real, then the Apostle could not write. For the wages of sin is death, but the free ft of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus r Lord." We cannot know what the Cross eans until we know what the Gospel eans by sin.

I

The modern person does not like to think himself as a sinner. It has been truthlly remarked that the higher man of toy does not worry about his sins. No ined. He rather talks about the survival of imitive fears which the uncivilized man had toward high powers, evil spirits in his world, but from which he now is happily emancipated. Or he calls it a "psychopathic aspect of adolescent mentality." Hegel, the philosopher, saw sin as identical with man's emergence from a state of nature and a prelude to virtue and maturity. Some day adolescent man will grow up and become a sensible, sane, responsible creature. well balanced in mind and actions. Fichte said, "I have no time for penitence." Sin, according to modern views, is merely the sowing of wild oats, the friskiness of the young colt, the irresponsibility of the puppy, the dash and speed of the teen-ager. Some day he will grow out of all that and then the world will be better and everyone will be happy. Sin then is largely ignorance, and experience will teach us all virtue!

Or, if we do not blame nature and the process of growing up, we lay it upon corrupt institutions, governments, philosophies. We blame it upon the Communists for upupsetting the apple cart, for fomenting trouble, for wanting unrest as a prelude to dictatorship. And the Communists blame all evil in the world upon the greedy bourgeois capitalists who feed upon the masses of people. No one humbly and modestly takes any of the blame upon himself. Like the Israelites of old he conveniently lays all his sins upon the scapegoat and sends it away into the mountains while he goes about his daily duties with an easy conscience.

But none of these theories attempts to explain why evil finds so fertile a soil among all people. The Nazis could not have succeeded as they did to re-arm Germany and to plunge the whole world into war had they not found a ready following among the people of Germany. Why is it that godless, materialistic, freedom-destroying, ruthless Com-

munism can gain even so much as a toe-hold upon nations? Who are these people who permit themselves to be lured by the evil sirens to shipwreck upon the rocks of tyranny? How is it that Eve listens to the serpent and Adam to Eve conspiring to usurp the place of God? How is it that governments can marshall millions of men and throw them into bloody conflict against masses from other nations, and we take it as a matter of course?

Is nature to blame? Those raw impulses, passions, instincts with which we are born? Is this world but in the process of becoming and we are unfortunately caught in the storms and floods? We have learned to understand nature pretty well; we have uncovered the laws of physics and chemistry; we know much about cause and effect and so how to control nature. We no longer fear her. We have in large degree mastered her powers and harnessed them to our drudgeries. We understand nature. But we do not understand human nature. We can predict what the laws of heat and light will do but we cannot predict what man will do. All of the most carefully wrought out schemes of human society, utopias, sooner or later break down because we cannot predict or control what man will do. Not even the dictators can rule arbitrarily for very long, for the underground soon swings into operation and undermines all that the dictator has planned. A planned economy would seem to be ideal, except you cannot plan humans.

Modern man therefore has been compelled to take his sins seriously. We have come face to face with them in such acute forms in Dachau, in Buchenwald, in Warsaw, in Hiroshima, in Nagasaki, in Korea, in Russia, in America, so that we can no longer ignore them. They threaten to undo us and to undo the world in which we live. If there is no sin and therefore no forgiveness then the modern man has no way to deal with moral failure. He can only blame himself and society. D. M. Baillie of Scotland has pointed out that the modern person refuses to acknowledge his sin; their memory of moral failure "instead of becoming a wholesome sense of sin which can lead to forgiveness, is unconsciously repressed until it becomes a morbid complex, with paralysing effects. Their sorrow is the sorrow of the world, which worketh death. It needs to be turned into 'godly sorrow' which worketh repentance unto salvation and bringeth no regret, because it leads to forgiveness." The modern man is trying to run away from his sins, to drown them in drink, but that trick will not work.

II

The Bible, therefore, is the most realisti book in the world. On its very first page where it is describing the glories of creatio and the dignity of man as the child of Go it also shows man in rebellion against hi Maker, in a rebellion which aims at dis pensing with God and becoming a god i his own right. According to the Biblical in terpretation the heart of man's sin is hi overseeming pride and self-centeredness. H has taken the natural dignity and capacit for improving his lot, a capacity of grea worth in the upward climb of man from bar barism, and has over-reached himself. H has thought because he could do many thing he could do everything. He has thought tha because he was higher than the animals h was also higher than humanity, that he de served to be something more than he was He thought that because he could eat out o the trees of God's garden and become a ma ruling over God's creation, he could als reach out and eat of the tree of life and rul over heaven. He forgot he was a finite ma with all the weaknesses of humanity an thought he could be a god with none abov him.

Note that the Bible does not push ma down into the dust, does not take away hi self-respect, does not bid him describe him self as filthy rags as the old hymns woul do. No other writing puts such high valu and dignity upon us as does the Bible. It i the charter of our freedom, the foundatio of our democracy. Wherever it is taugh man begins to throw off the chains. Free dom was not invented in Moscow with it renunciation of God and its worship of Le in; it began in Palestine with the worshi of God by men as the children of God.

If man were merely a child of nature, h would not be a sinner, he would be but an other of the animals which swarm the earth Only because he is a child of God, subjec to the moral will of God, can he be a sinne in rebellion against that will, and likewis a candidate for repentance and forgiveness Only a citizen of a country can be guilty o treason against that country. Only a respon sible individual can be held responsible be fore the law. Laws, therefore, against trea son, against crimes, are first of all a recog nition of our citizenship for which we ma be judged and for which we may be re warded.

III

This then is the background of the Cros and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the reaso for his giving of himself to death for ou

ake. If we were not sinners, only ignorant
ildren, only savages or barbarians grow-
g up, if we were not really responsible
ersons under judgment for our rebellion
gainst the highest that we know, then we
ould need no Cross; all we would need is a
t of education to show us a better way,
bit of culture to raise our standard of liv-
g; show us the way to right and truth
nd we will walk in it. Then, as the Greeks
ought, man is naturally good and all he
eeds is a bit of instruction. Socrates taught
at "the good is the useful. Virtue is hap-
iness and no man willingly does wrong, but
nly through ignorance; for there is no man
ho would not will his own happiness." Con-
ront the wicked man with a better way
nd he will immediately clasp it to his
art. Describe to the alcoholic the wonders
abstinence and sobriety and forthwith
e will abandon his drink and become sober.
human nature were as simple as that, the
sk would be easy.

But more discerning observers have been
different picture. "I know and approve
e good, and I do the worse." "The good
hich I would I do not; but the evil which
would not, that I practice — What I hate,
at I do — I find — that to me who would
good, evil is present. Wretched man that
am! Who shall deliver me out of the body
this death?" That man is honest. He is
alistic. He has seen life as it is. He knows
hat he has gotten hold of, something deep-
atedly wrong within him, something
rong with his will, a blot on the escutch-
n somewhere, not just ignorance, nor
st barbarism or crudeness nor lack of fine-
ss or culture, but corruption of the will,
bellion against the highest and best. He
ho has not seen himself in this light, has
t seen himself.

But let us not linger here. The Bible does
t let us linger here. No sooner has Paul
t out the wail, "who shall deliver me out
the body of this death?" than he quickly
ies out, "I thank God through Jesus
hrist." We do not talk about sin because
is hopeless, or as Coolidge's preacher to
ow we are "agin it," but because there is
pe, because there is forgiveness, because
ere is redemption from that sin, because
ere is a way to become a new person, be-
use there is a Cross.

In Christ, and especially in the Cross, we
ristians believe we see the grace of love
God shed abroad over the world, taking
r sin up into itself and disposing of it,
e the tide which comes up over the picnic
rewn beach and washes it clean. We be-
ve that God was in Christ, as he was in
no other, meeting our rebellion and the evil of the world on its own ground, revealing it for what it is, letting it drag him to the Cross, letting it loose with all its furies and its craft upon him, and then rising up in the midst of its death and breaking its power. We believe that God has come into our life, has met our sin head on, without turning aside to avoid its blow and has dealt it a death blow, and out of that victory leads us back to himself. "O happy guilt, that did deserve such and so great a Redeemer," said Augustine.

We believe that in Christ, and especially in the Cross, God has disclosed his everlasting love for us, in that he did not forsake us in our rebellion, but he continued to love us while we were rebels, and by that love he wins us back to himself, for the power of his love is greater than the power of our stubborn insurrection. And only the prodigal knows what this love of the Father really means; the older brother, who remained at home, outwardly obedient but a stranger in his Father's house, did not guess what love awaited him there.

We believe that where sin abounds, grace does much more abound, that there is forgiveness for our sins. Not an easy forgiveness of an indulgent Father who snaps his finger at evil and indulgently draws a line through the unhappy record, but the forgiveness of One who knows what sin really is, and how we forfeit our best destiny when we forget God and seek some other way, who has no illusions about the power of evil in the world to destroy the very Kingdom of heaven if it were not restrained. It cost God something to forgive us, it cost him the Cross. And the Cross safeguards righteousness. No one can ever again sin lightly or confess his sins and all the while secretly intend to go back to them since God will forgive as often as he comes. Never. He who trifles with God in that manner trifles with fire, he sells his soul for a lie, he becomes a crafty servant of evil, in league with the kingdom of darkness. He twists the spear in the side of Christ and causes the wound to re-open. He pounds upon the nails in the Saviour's hands. He mocks at thee Christ's sufferings, and despises God's sacrifice. But he who really sees the Cross for what it is, the symbol of God's love pouring itself out to us, will never treat that love lightly. It will bring him to his knees in penitence, and then it will lift him up in victory.

The Christian faith proposes to send out into the world new men and women who have gone through this forgiveness experi-

ence. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death. This is the kind of person which once wo the world from hopelessness and it is th kind of person who will do the same onc more. It must begin with us and now.

The Cost of Forgiveness

WILLIAM GODDARD SHERMAN, First Methodist Church, Stuart, Florida

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.—Psalm 32:1

Christianity is a religion for sinners. For those who feel that they are above sin, and their lives beyond reproach, Christianity has nothing to offer. But to those who know that they are sinners in the sight of God, Christianity comes with its blessed promise of forgiveness, and offers them the gift of God's redeeming grace.

The soul of man longs for forgiveness. Regardless of what heights we may achieve morally, there is the realization that our lives fall short of the glory which God ordained for man. Even our best — our holiest and our most righteous attitudes — are still imperfect in the presence of the divine Perfection.

It does the conscience no good to argue that we are imperfect by nature, and therefore are not responsible for the sins which beset us. We know too well that it is the rebellion of man against God which has destroyed our glory. We know beyond all argument that we have transgressed the law of God, and because of our sin we need His forgiveness.

Let us determine first what forgiveness is, and why it is necessary. It is that divine act which removes the stain and penalty of our sin, and restores us to favor with God. Since man's sin is always against God, only God can forgive. Even though crimes may be committed against other human beings, still all sin is, in the final analysis, committed against the Lord. No sin, even though forgiven on the human level, is truly forgiven until God has forgiven it.

Forgiveness is necessary because sin has erected a wall of partition between God and man. Only the divine forgiveness can bring man, restored to wholeness, beyond the wall of separation.

From beginning to end the Scripture makes clear to us that God's forgiving grace is the soul's deepest need. The fact that so many have not acknowledged this need does not mean that they do not possess the need; it only means that they are insensitive to that need. Doctor Clow somewhere pointed out that if forgiveness is not real to a man, then neither are God, God's love, nor hi own sin. Every soul needs divine forgive ness, but every soul must first confess th need before the forgiveness may be exper enced.

I

God has provided the needed forgiveness The very purpose of the life, death, and res urrection of Christ was to provide for thi deep need of the soul. To regard any othe as His primary purpose is to minimize Hi mission. Often we stress the statement o Jesus, "I am come that they may have life and have it more abundantly," and assum that He was interested in helping us to en joy life to the full. That is true, provide we correctly interpret His meaning of th abundant life. And let it be clearly under stood that no one can live the abundant lif in Jesus until his sins are forgiven. Unt God has forgiven sin we yet remain in ou sin. And certainly it is obvious that th abundant life in Christ can never be rea ized while the soul is yet in sin.

Jesus summed up His purpose at the Las Supper. After they had eaten, He took th cup, and said, "This cup is the new cove ant in my blood, shed for you and for man for the remission of sins." The avowed pu pose of Christ in going to the Cross was t provide forgiveness for man's sin. The hea ing miracles, the teachings which stirre men's minds, the many wondrous aspects o His ministry — all of these were secondar The primary purpose was to redeem the so of man from sin.

II

There is a threefold aspect of forgivene which is described in the opening words o the thirty-second Psalm. "Blessed is h whose transgression is forgiven, whose si is covered; blessed is the man unto who the Lord imputeth not iniquity."

The blessedness of God's pardon is mad available to the sinner at Calvary. No ma will ever understand how Christ accom plished it; it is one of the mysteries of Ca

ary. Yet we walk away from the Cross re-eemed men and women, with these three spects of forgiveness realized.

Transgressions Forgiven. The man who rusts in his own morality always overlooks vital point. Let us suppose for a moment hat it were possible for one to live an ab-olutely perfect life. Such a person, deter-nined to come to everlasting life, strives o avoid all sin from this moment forward. Now let us suppose that he succeeds. Let s imagine that for twenty years he lives a erfectly spotless life, free from all sin. Has e earned redemption? He has not, for the act always overlooked is the sin which went efore. Even perfect morality from this mo-nent forward cannot remove the stain of ast sin.

The Cross of Christ is essential to gather p the sins of the past, present, and future. Man is always bound to the present moment. Ie may act as a result of the past, and so s to determine the future, but he is always mited by the present. And while he may nfluence the future, he may never influ-nce the past. Rather, he is influenced by he past. Thus it must become clear that omething beyond man's own morality is ssential to his forgiveness, for morality nay never reach back to redeem the past. t may correct past mistakes, but it can ever remove the guilt of past sins.

The Cross of Christ is timeless. Though n event in time, yet it is eternal. At the Cross the sins of past, present, and future re washed away. All transgression is for-iven.

Sin is Covered. One of the mysteries of he Cross is how the power of God can over-ule the sin in our lives. The redeeming race of God in Christ means that the power f sin is destroyed, and our energies are ow diverted into creative channels. Charles Wesley wrote:

He breaks the power of canceled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.

To say that the blood of Christ covers ur sin is not to imply that all marks of in are removed. Even the redeeming grace f an Almighty God cannot destroy sin's errible influence. He may break the power f canceled sin in man's soul, but He can-ot undo the evil which has been done in he world.

A man came to Christ one night not long since. He had been a beer manufacturer for over thirty years. Now in earnest devotion and honest repentance he surrendered his occupation. His own sin was covered by the blood of Christ. He now is a Christian, and is seeking to labor for the Lord in whatever way God directs. His transgression was forgiven, his sin was covered, but the influence of his sin remains. The untold hundreds of young men and women who had been started on the road to destruction by his influence are still on that road. God has forgiven his sin, but God cannot destroy the effects of his sin.

That is the tragedy of sin in our lives. Even though we may repent of it, and strive to make amends, we cannot retract the evil which has been done. The sins of men set forth in the world evil influences which are beyond the power even of God to recall.

Iniquity Not Imputed. The third aspect of forgiveness which is provided at Calvary is the removal of sin's penalty. When God forgives our sin, He removes our obligation to be punished for that sin.

This is not to say that God simply ignores sin. It means that our Wonderful Saviour has paid the price of our sins already: "He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

God, being a righteous God, never merely ignores sin. He demands that atonement be made for the sin of transgression against His holy law. The mystery of Calvary is that God in Christ has atoned for the sins of the world. He, by giving of Himself, has provided for sin's penalty.

Dr. Macartney calls forgiveness the most beautiful word in the language, because it is the costliest. He is right. We have not yet understood what it cost God to forgive our sin. Even when we have said that it cost His only Son, still we have not come near realizing the sorrow in the heart of our heavenly Father over our sin, nor the costliness of our pardon purchased on Calvary's tree.

Only this we can say, with full knowledge that it is totally inadequate to match His eternal love:

Demands my soul, my life, my all.
Love so amazing, so divine,

When a Sinner Repents

HENRY J. BERKOBIN, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Nutley, New Jersey

There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.
—Luke 15:10.

When a sinner repents there is joy in the presence of the angels of God. We have this fact on the authority of the Lord Jesus. It was the same Jesus who declared that He came down from heaven, that He would ascend back to heaven, and that all the while He was in heaven. He made it clear that He knew what was happening in heaven at all times, and among the angels of God. He it is who told the stories of the lost sheep and the lost coin. When He concluded the latter story, He stated, "I say unto you," (that is, *take it on my authority*) "that when a sinner repents there is joy in the presence of the angels of God."

I wonder why the angels rejoice when a sinner repents.

The more I think about it, the more I come to the obvious conclusion that the reason the angels rejoice when a sinner repents is that they are *angels*. They are pure beings, clean and holy; they are far above the level of man. Because they are pure, holy beings, they cannot gloat over the miseries of a sinner. No angel can take the attitude, "Let him suffer the consequences of his sin." One could not be an angel and say, "Well, he made his bed, let him lie in it." It would be impossible to be an angel and say, "They did wrong. Now let them make the best of it."

Only human beings can take attitudes like that. Only demons can feel and act that way. Only base creatures can gloat over thee miseries and sufferings and sorrows that people bring upon themselves.

The Bible does teach us that man was made a little lower than the angels. He was *made* a little lower than the angels. Would that he still were a little lower than they! Now man is depraved, so debased that you could class him among demons — for among men there seldom is any joy when a sinner repents. Among men there is rarely the desire that sinners might flee from their sin and come to life. Most humans enjoy seeing sinners go right down to the end of the road of their misery and endure their eternal anguish.

Of course, there are men and women who have fallen under the spell of Jesus Christ, and who have risen from their debased state of sin and are returning to the status of being a little lower than angels. There are people who, having fallen under th spell of the Lord Jesus, are concerned abou the condition of sinners. They are not happ when they see people suffering the result of the wrong they have done. They do no rejoice to see people continuing in their evi ways. They go out of their way to try t bring redemption and healing to the los sinner. The Christian, who has yielded hi own heart and soul to Christ, having ac cepted redemption from Him, rejoices whe a sinner repents. He is like the angels o God who rejoice when a sinner repents.

When a sinner repents, the Lord tells us there is joy in the presence of the angel of God. Why?

Because they are angels they understan all that is at stake in the life of each indi vidual sinner. They know exactly what wil be the result of unrepented sin. They kno the one thing we do not want to know: tha there is a hell at the end of the road fo the unrepentent sinner. We do not want t hear that, and if we hear it, we pay littl attention to it. We do not let the horro and awfulness of it penetrate our minds. W hope that maybe there isn't a hell after al The angels of God know there is, and there fore they are glad when one does turn awa from his wicked ways.

It is strange, isn't it, how upset we ca get about the miseries and sufferings tha people must endure in all parts of th world? Let someone tell us about the hard ships our soldiers must endure in far-awa places and we get excited and concerne And rightly so. But the angels of God kno that the unrepentant sinnner has somethin worse ahead of him. That is why, when sinner repents, there is joy in the presenc of the angels of God.

Not only do they know what the end o the road holds for the sinner; the angels o God also know, better than we, all the in describable misery that people endure whi they are still in this world, as the result o their unrepented sin. We hear so much abou anxiety neurosis. What is it? Simply this that people are bearing within their sou the burden of sin and wrong-doing whic they have not brought to light by repen ance. They have not laid it open and a cepted forgiveness. When we see a repentan sinner getting the relief that comes fro true repentance, we get a little insight in

why the angels of God are glad when a inner repents of his sin.

When a sinner repents there is joy in the resence of the angels of God. Why?

Well, for another thing, they know the bsolute necessity for repentance. They now that only when he repents does the inner begin to go up. By his repentance, e goes back to self-respect. He is going ack to fellowship with God. He is going ack again to a better life. Unrepented sin eeps dragging a man down. It pulls him arther and farther down. Somewhere, if e is to stop going down and start going p, he must put on the brakes. The stop in he decline must begin sometime. That stop, hat putting on the brakes, is the act of epentance, the turning from a wicked way f life to the good way. The word repentnce means changing one's mind, changing ne's thinking, changing one's direction. The angels of God know that a man's direction can never be changed until at some oint he stops and makes that change. The ngels of God know the necessity of repentnce if a man is to come to the better life, nd to fellowship with God.

Oscar Wilde wrote many interesting tories and other literary works. I believe he greatest sentence he ever wrote occurs n his *De Profundis*, written while in jail: The highest moment in a man's career may e the hour when he kneels in the dust and eats upon his breast and tells all the sins f his life." There is a sinner who understands what repentance does for a man. That alling down and confessing one's wrong, urning one's back upon the evil ways, hat is the repentance that brings joy to he angels of God, because they know that hen a man can begin to go upward.

When a sinner repents there is joy in he presence of the angels of God. Why?

I believe, also, because angels know how ifficult it is for a man to repent. To reent is an exceptionally difficult thing, beause a person has to change habits, habits ometimes of very long standing. You try o change some trivial personal habit, not sinful one, and even this is difficult to do. Then you try to change some vicious habit, nd seek to substitute in its place one that honorable and good, you find that the orce of years of habit is so great that it is lmost impossible to make the break. Indeed, ome go so far as to say that if you are past 5 years of age there is not a chance for you amend your life. Don't listen to them! ard as it may be, a sinner can repent, even ter in life. And the angels of God, who now how difficult it is for a man to change his habits, certainly thrill with joy every time a man does it.

The difficulties that stand in the way of repentance are not only those of breaking habits. The angels of God know, also, how little co-operation a man gets from his fellow men when he tries to amend his ways. Very few human beings sincerely try to help a sinner amend his ways. If a man is associated with others in his sin, they take it as a personal affront when he tries to change his life. They don't cheer; they jeer. They ridicule him all along the way. Let the drunkard try to flee from his drunkenness; all his cohorts do all they can to bring him back to their company and his degraded life. Let the woman of sin resolve that she will live cleanly and decently again; and see how evil everywhere tries to drag her down again! It is so hard for a sinner to repent. The angels of God know that, and they rejoice when a sinner turns from his wickedness and comes to life.

But it is not only the pressures that are brought by companions in sin and vice that make it difficult for the sinner to repent. It is the tragic indifference, and even hostility, of so-called good, decent, honorable people that are hindrances. What would you do? Would you receive into your social fellowship one that you knew had been guilty of some crime? Even though you knew he had repented and was trying to live decently again? Or would you give him "the cold shoulder"? Most church people would shun him. It is hard, so hard, to stage a comeback. The angels of God know that. That is why Jesus told us that when a sinner repents there is joy in the presence of the angels of God.

Immediately after Jesus told the story of how the woman rejoiced who found her lost coin, He told the story about the Prodigal Son. In it, He makes it clear how difficult it is for a sinner to repent, because he does not get the co-operation of his fellow men. What a tragic ending the story of the Prodigal Son has: His brother resented that he had come home. His brother was hurt that he had fled from his wickedness and wanted to try to live properly again. Many a prodigal has a brother like that. Many a so-called Christian acts like the prodigal's brother.

There is an interesting statement in the book of Genesis that occurs in the story of Lot while he was fleeing from Sodom as it was about to be destroyed for its sin. Lot had been ordered by God to leave Sodom. But surely, when that man left, there were many people in Sodom who jeered him because he wanted to live the decent life, the

kind of life that God wanted him to live. Lot must have felt the pressure that tried to draw him back to the sins of Sodom. But here is a statement that should reassure every one who tries to repent of his sin: "The angels laid hold on his hand." They do rejoice when a sinner repents.

If you feel that all you need to make the break is a little encouragement, don't look for it from men. You are not apt to get it there But you can have the most strengthening encouragement: the assurance that the angels of God care, that they want you to come to life, and that they will rejoice

I can give you a greater assurance. In fact, in the parable preceding this text, Jesus went so far as to say that all heaven rejoices when a sinner repents. That means that God wants you to repent. In his joy He will pardon you.

Life can be yours. Don't lose it because of the indifference, the hostility, or the stupidity of your fellow men. All heaven is ready to help you.

The Paradox of Sin

PAUL LAMBOURNE HIGGINS, Hyde Park Methodist Church, Chicago, Illinois.

I cannot understand my own actions; I do not act as I want to act; on the contrary, I do what I detest.—Romans 7:15 (Moffatt).

The paradoxical nature of sin makes it one of the most difficult problems for the Christian's consideration. A paradox is a statement or feeling that seems contrary to common sense and logic, but is still true. In his sublime letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul, concerned about the sin that besets man, writes: "I cannot understand my own actions; I do not act as I want to act; on the contrary, I do what I detest."

Paul's letter is partly autobiographical. He had wrestled with this agonizing problem of sin. In great anguish, he had cried out: "Miserable wretch that I am! Who will rescue me?"

"God will! Thanks be to Him through Christ Jesus our Lord!" This was the triumphant answer Paul found to his dilemma. In being a Christian he found the way of hope.

There goes on a great struggle in the human soul. A person wants to do what is right, but wrong seems all that he can manage. He is conscious of the evil he is doing, and yet he sincerely wants to do good. This strange inward division is frustrating and painful.

I

Modern man enjoys no exemption from this ancient paradox which he inherits from the race. The element of sin is universal. Sin is rebellion against the will of God. The great sin of modern man is clearly revealed in his very lack of religious faith. It is seen in the outright failure to do God's will. It is found in man's propensity to call good things evil and evil things good. The tragic and pitiful part of man's predicament is that while he does evil, he really wants to do good. A very simple example is that of the man of good desire, who loses his temper and does the very thing he hates.

The world's standards of good and evil are often very different from God's standards. This adds to the confusion over values Nikolai Berdyaev, the great Russian theologian, said that Christianity is a revolt against the laws and the fashions of the world. The world follows the pattern of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth Christianity rejects such revenge and retaliation as sinful. The world makes war a fashionable thing, clothing it with high sounding patriotism, but Christianity calls it sinful. The world bases its economic systems on selfishness, whereas Christianity extols unselfishness. The world demands first allegiance to the state, while Christianity puts the individual ahead of the state. To be a Christian in the world one has to be something of an anarchist.

We can still see the Beast rising out of the sea, as in the *Apocalypse* or in Melville's *Moby Dick*. There is still the attempt of Caesar to enslave men, to stunt the spirit, and to shackle the mind. But this force of evil does not have the last word. The victory belongs to Love, as exemplified in Christ the Love which triumphs over force and hatred and every other type of evil.

II

It is hard to deal with sin because so often the world's idea of sin is different from God's concept. The scribes and Pharisees wanted to stone the adultress, until Jesus said: "He that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone at her" (John 8:7) Jesus reached the consciences of these self-righteous men. He could see in them a wickedness far worse than that of the hapless woman.

Why is it that an earnest Christian feel

t times like saying, "I do not act as I ant to act; on the contrary, I do what I etest?" It is because when once exposed the perfection of Christ, the individual ealizes how far short he falls.

A true Christian is more conscious of his ins than a non-Christian. He will not be uick about claiming perfection. John Wes- y said we should strive toward perfection, ut he never claimed it for himself. There re people who like to think of themselves s saints, and in doing so they only re- eal a lack of sensitivity to Christian values. hey may be the reason for this little hyme:

To live with the saints in Heaven
Is bliss and glory;
To live with the saints on earth
Is — often another story.

A Christian knows he is a sinner and eeds Christ and the Church. A non-Chris- ian underestimates his own sins and hinks he can get along without Christ and he Church.

Every person has certain instinctive de- ires. These may lead to good results, or to vil results, depending upon the individual's ecision and action. It is difficult, if not mpossible, to repress instinctive desires. f the desire is repressed for a while, it is kely to form a "complex" below the hreshold of consciousness and to break in- o the conscious again in some other form, erhaps a form more dangerous than the riginal.

III

What then can be done about these in- tinctive desires? They hold potentialities or either good or evil. At this point the hristian faith must be the guiding stand- rd, directing the individual's desires into hose areas which make for the good life.

A little child is not really as innocent as thought. He has many instincts, and often hese take the forms of mischief and cruel- y. On the other hand, he possesses certain udiments of conscience, which can be de- eloped along Christian lines. The child's ensitivity to right and wrong grows with me and experience, teaching and environ- ent. There are within him the posibili- es for both good and evil. More than any- hing, it is faith in the God of Christ which an direct the life toward the fulfillment f the good.

When one becomes acquainted with Christ, e not only becomes more conscious of his wn sins, but becomes more keenly aware f the possibilities for good. He begins to fathom the fuller meaning of life and sal- vation.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, in *The Marble Faun,* makes the radical statement that sin is like sorrow, an element of human educa- tion "through which we struggle to a higher and purer state than we could otherwise have attained." It is the one who is *con- scious* of his sins who can struggle to the higher state. The man who thinks he is with- out sin cannot get very far spiritually, be- cause he is blinded by the cardinal sin of pride.

We cannot afford to be indifferent toward our sins. It is only when we recognize that we have sins that we are able to begin the work of overcoming them. Each yielding to the lure of evil, be it of the flesh, or the mind, or the spirit, be it as an individual, or as a part of society, is destructive to the human personality. A man may say he is not counting a certain sin this time, but as William James said: "He may not count it, and a kind heaven may not count it, but it is being counted just the same. Down among his nerve cells and fibres the mole- cules are counting it, registering it, stor- ing it up to be used against him when the next temptation comes." This is the road to destruction and despair.

Let each search his soul and discover anew his own sins and weaknesses. These evils may not be the usually catalogued ones which are most often mentioned. Sin is not sex, for sex is essentially good, al- though it can be used for sinful purposes. Sin is not money, for money can be used for either good or evil. Sin is the failure to do God's will. Emerson thought that the mis- chiefs of which most people are guilty are such things as living for show, or wasting energy and time in trivialities.

The paradox of sin is still seen in the words of Paul: "I cannot understand my own actions; I do not act as I want to act; on the contrary, I do what I detest." The Apostle found the way of facing and solv- ing this problem. He found his help in Christ. So too can we.

IV

Will there be perfection in this life? Will one overcome all of his sins? I believe not. As Immanuel Kant put it, perfection re- quires eternity. We must look to the life after death for the ultimate victory. In our life here, it is a mistake to overestimate one's virtues. Usually behind these exagger- ated estimates of our own goodness there is hidden the fact that our case is not so strong as we would have it. We need di-

vine help. We must find our peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is One who can give us the strength we need and a righteousness which we by ourselves could not achieve:

He breaks the power of canceled sin,
He sets the prisoner free.

Through Him we grow in grace. With the coming of more and more spiritual power into our lives, we make progress in our struggle with sin.

Every Christian, as Phillips Brooks used to remind us, should be able to look back a year or five years and note some dead sin with which he once wrestled. Not some sin with which he grew bored until it was no longer appealing and died, but some sin which was actually conquered by his own Christ-given strength.

This progress should go on. Do not b content with past victories. There are som sins in your life now which need to b faced and removed. There is some hatred, o prejudice, or resentment, some manifesta tion of laziness or neglect, some foul habi or vice, some sin which needs overcomin if you are to move to a higher stage of life Do not go on forever in idle skirmishin with the same old enemy. Get something ac complished! Ask for God's help. Be stead fast in your determination to uproot thi evil.

This problem of sin is a part of every on of us. It will conquer us and leave us miser able, if we do not master it. We must hel ourselves. We must be resolute and deter mined. But our strength alone will neve be enough. We need the power of Christ We must fix our hope on His saving grace

How to Get Rid of Your Sins

CHARLES L. ALLEN, Grace Methodist Church, Atlanta, Georgia

By grace are ye saved through faith.—Ephesians 2:8.

That old saying, "Spare the rod and spoil the child," has now been rather thoroughly discredited by modern child psychology. However, I have an idea the old way had a lot of merit. A child is disobedient or commits some wrong. Immediately a feeling of guilt sets up within the child and as long as nothing is done about it, that feeling of guilt remains.

But when the child is whipped, then the guilt is cancelled. There is the feeling that he has now paid for his wrong and it is all over. I do not remember receiving a great number of whippings as a child, but I do remember some. I remember the pain of Papa's razor strap, but I also remember something of a relief it brought. I did wrong, I got caught, I suffered the consequences and then it was all over.

Suppose, instead of ever being punished, the parent keeps a careful record of each misdeed of the child in a big book. There is no way for any of those records to be erased and day after day the child is told that some day he will have to stand before the parent and hear each one of his misdeeds recalled and then he will be whipped for the rest of his life.

Naturally such a thought would cause periods of depression in the child and take much of the joy out of living. In many instances it would make the child physically sick. Often sickness is a defense mechanism to relieve the burden of the mind. Or maybe in his desire to justify himself the child would carefully watch the wrongs of othe children and claim that he is no worse tha others.

In an effort to get out from under th condemnation hanging over it, maybe th child would seek to put the blame on others And certainly the child would rather b punished and get it over with, than b forced to carry the burden of the dread o punishment in addition to its sense of guilt

But all of this is hypothetical because n parent would be so inhumane as to keep big record book of wrong against its chil and hold over it the threat of judgmen and eternal whipping.

Yet that is exactly the picture of God w have created. I remember a little choru from childhood: "He sees all we do, He hear all we say; Our Lord is writing all th time, time, time." And I visioned the bi book of the Lord containing the record o every evil thing I had done.

With that picture in mind, many peopl actually desire the punishment of God. A Hegel expressed it, "The sinful soul has right to its punishment." Or as Plato pu it, "Every soul will run eagerly to it judge." I buried a baby some time ago. Th father had neglected God and had don wrong. I really believe he felt a release fro the burden of his guilt when he told m God had punished him.

Certainly we do not believe God woul take a man's baby to punish him. Yet whe our conscience is burdened by our own sin

ve do reach the point of really wishing God vould punish us and thereby relieve the urden. The idea of some day having to ace up to all our sins and not being able o do anything about them, robs life of its oy.

But there is something better than pun-shment that God has done about our sins nd there is something we can do.

I

The first thing to do about our sins is onfession. When one chooses evil instead f good and conceals that act he plants vithin himself a guilty secret. And that uilty secret is not something one can just orget. As long as it remains a secret there s no way it can be relieved and made right. ut when it is confessed it is a secret no nger.

E. Stanley Jones tells of a man who had one to pieces nervously, and the physician inding nothing physically the matter, asked im, "Have you got anything on your con-cience?"

The man was furious and cried, "I came ere to get medical treatment, not to be pried nto." He stamped out of the office. The ext day he came back like a whipped dog. 'You are right," he said. "I have something n my conscience. My father died and left n estate, and I was made executor. I kept ack part of my brother's share. I stole it."

The physician had him write out a letter f full confession to his brother and went ut with him to mail it. As the letter fell nto the box, the man exclaimed, "Thank od that burden is gone!"

In Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, the tory is told of a "guilty secret." For seven ears Arthur Dimmesdale secretly sup-ressed a guilty conscience. But one day he nounted the pillory in the market place and o his townsmen cried: "Stands anyone here vho questions God's judgment on a sinner? ehold, behold a dreadful witness to it." Ie was happy to accept his punishment in rder to relieve his guilty secret through onfession.

First, one must confess to himself. But it ust be an honest confession. That is the nly kind good for the soul. To admit a vrong and then excuse it by saying we are o worse than many others, or to put the lame on someone else, is to add to our sin he sin of hypocrisy. David prays, "I ac-nowledge my transgressions" (Psalm 51). Ie pleads no mitigating circumstances; he akes the blame.

Then, we must make our confessions to od. Read again these very familiar words: "What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear . . . What a privilege to carry, everything to God in prayer . . . O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear . . . All because we do not carry, Everything to God in prayer.

In confession it is usually good to take pencil and paper and write it out. Each year on the Sunday night nearest New Year, I ask the people to write on a slip of paper the sin on their conscience. On the altar is a vessel with several burning candles in the bottom. Each person puts his confession into the fire on the altar. It is a simple act yet it has helped many. If you do write it out, be sure to immediately destroy it. The act of destruction has great value.

If God is not real, if your prayer seems like "talking to nothing," then it is good to make your confession to some other person in whom you have complete confidence. Confession should never be public nor should it be made in groups. To your pastor, in some cases to the person you have wronged, above all to one who knows God.

II

It is often pointed out that before one can become a Christian he must make restitution and change his way of living. But that seems to me to have the cart before the horse. I rather believe that one makes restitution and change of life because he has become a Christian. Good works and a clean life is not the pathway to salvation in Christ.

Rather is salvation in Christ the doorway to the good life. John Homer Miller tells of a social worker trying every method to get a filthy, unhealthy family to clean up their home but with no success. Finally, a new method was tried. The social worker brought to the people the loveliest, purest, most spotless potted lily he could buy and put it on their living room table.

There the pure lily sat in judgment upon that dirty, unkempt room. The family cleaned up the room to make it a more fitting place for their new possession. Then the living room sat in judgment upon the rest of the house. So they cleaned that up, too.

There was Zaccheus, grasping, greedy, selfish and thieving. But when Jesus saw him sitting in the tree that day, the Lord did not say, "Zaccheus, give back what you have stolen, change your way of living and I will go home with you." Instead, the Lord went with him without mentioning his wrong life.

We do not have a record of their conver-

sation but I doubt if Christ ever told him to make restitution and change. Instead, as Zaccheus entertained "The Lily of the Valley," he came to love Him. And properly to love Christ is to be saved by Him. As the beauty of Jesus was seen by Zaccheus, he also saw the ugliness of his life.

So, he says, "The half of my good I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Instead of grasping, he began to think of giving and to make restitution for his past wrong. Then said Jesus, "This day is salvation come to this house." He was saved not because of his restitution and change; rather were those proofs of his salvation.

Describing the method of his work among the North American Indians, David Brainerd in his journal noted: "I never got away from Jesus, and Him crucified; and I found that when my people were gripped by this, I had no need to give them instructions about morality. I found that one followed as the sure and inevitable fruit of the other."

A lady phoned saying that she had taken some money and asked if she must pay it back in order to be a Christian. I explained that when she becomes a Christian, then she will gladly make restitution for her past, that deserved apology is eagerly made when the love of Christ comes into a heart.

We hear it said, "The golden rule is my religion." But the golden rule is nobody's religion. It is not a religion. The golden rule is a result and expression of religion. Some people say, I must quit this or that wrong; I must clean up my life; I must change my way of living. That is a fruitless and powerless resolution. But when the power of God through Christ comes into a life, those sins "which doth so easily beset us," have power over us no longer. It is not through one's own will power, but rather through the power of God's will that one is saved.

III

I have been writing about a sense of guilt. The psychologist can also write about it and psychology and psychiatry can do much in helping the guilt-burdened soul. I do not disparage those great sciences. I have studied psychology for many years and I have recommended good psychiatrists to many people. The preacher who ridicules those sciences is just parading his own ignorance.

But psychology and psychiatry, as such, now nothing about forgiveness and redemption. Leslie Weatherhead points out that i is just at this point that the patient fre quently feels an intolerable loneliness an helplessness. Now he is ready for the goo news of the gospel, for something to b done for him and in him which can only b done by God.

So we come to what is perhaps the great est thought that can occupy the huma mind, the atonement of Christ. It canno be fully explained in a few sentences, bu let me make the effort. Sin is the conscious choice of known evil. The penalty of sin i separation from God. Being separated fron God, there is no contact between us an Him.

The Bible tells us, "He (Christ) eve liveth to make intercession for them (thos who have sinned)" (Hebrews 7:25). Th word intercession there does not mean pray ing for another, rather it means acting o behalf of another. Here is the picture. Je sus is God and equal to God and He ha hold on God.

Jesus is also man, voluntarily taking th form of humanity. "And the Word (God) was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (Joh 1:14). So, in one hand Christ has God an the other hand is held within reach of man When man takes hold of Christ through faith, then the hand of man and the hand of God are brought together. It helps to un derstand the atonement when we write it at-one-ment.

A little girl, upon seeing for the first tim a cross upon an altar, asked: "What's th plus sign doing on the table?" That is it God on the one hand, man on the other. Th cross is the plus which adds them together

It is not that man "lays his sins on Je sus," not that he transfers his guilt t Christ, but rather through the shedding o His blood, Christ lays His grace on man "By grace are ye saved through faith," th Bible tells us. No matter how guilty on might be, never forget that He said "M grace is sufficient for thee" (II Corinthian 12:9).

When through faith in Christ we commi our souls to Him the Grace of God come into our lives, driving out the evil feelin of guilt, its burden, shame and remorse, an the soul is set to singing again.

His shed blood on the Cross is both th symbol and the pledge that God has gon to the uttermost to redeem and save us And "sinners plunged beneath that floo lose all their guilty stains."

The Appetite of Iniquity

HAROLD A. BOSLEY, First Methodist Church, Evanston, Illinois

Scripture Lesson: Psalm 14

Historic religion has learned many things n the course of her long journey since the awn of the human enterprise. She has earned them the hard way, and she has een forced to test them over and over gain the one place where every idea and nsight is declared to be either important r unimportant,—namely, in the crucible of uman experience. Not the experience mere- of this person or that, this age and peo- le or that age and people, but the expe- ience of all men who have been exposed the idea and insight over the ages. Peo- le who say or infer that religion is the reation of either fear-ridden men, or wish- il thinkers or utopian dreamers, usually verlook this fact as they frame their su- erficial indictment. If they would only enter their attention for a while upon what eligion has learned, created and achieved human history, they would be in a much tronger position to make a fair estimate f her worth. And if they would look care- ully at the facts, they would discover high n the scale of important lessons she has earned one that is especially relevant to ur times: *the meaning and power of evil life must be faced openly and overcome onestly by all who seriously want to bring heir lives to any kind of fulfillment.* This esson was hammered out on the anvil of ndividual as well as group experience. It as been checked and rechecked by the ex- erience of many generations — each of hich has had its quota of skeptics and ynics about this whole business of ethics, orals and religion. It comes as close to eing a completely demonstrated fact as we an possibly hope to get from history. And et—we are living witnesses to the ancient ruth that "The one thing we learn from istory is that we do not learn from his- ory."

We are dodging and twisting every which ay today in our frantic efforts to evade ne meaning and the power of evil in our ndividual and corporate life. We shrink rom any serious use of the words, "sin" and iniquity." They grate on our ears; they jar ur sensitivities; they disturb our aplomb; e quickly charge them off as the tools of anatics, and go thankfully but apprehen- ively on our way, hoping to hear no more bout them. Yet we can no more escape them han Francis Thompson could forever elude The Hound of Heaven." The facts denoted by the words, "sin" and "iniquity," are a living part of our own life. Wherever we look—whether inside us or round about—we see the facts of sin and iniquity writing their tragic lessons in the plain, suffering and tragedy of lives and times like ours. Look carefully at any great issue that our fathers before us would have designated unhesitatingly as sin and inquity. Earlier religious thinkers may have missed some facts about human life, but they did not miss the fact of sin—nor did they mistake what one of them called "the gravity of sin."

I

The writer of the Fourteenth Psalm gives us a sharp description of what might well be called the appetite of iniquity. He both appreciated the gravity of sin and was certain he lived among a people who did not. All this and more, too, shines through his description of sinners as those "who eat up my people as they eat bread." He laid his finger on the root cause of sin in their life, and he pointed it out to all who would listen.

Sin, the Psalmist says, stems from the effort to ignore or deny God. People who think this way are led along the pathway of disaster by the delusion that they are on their own, that they are entitled to do whatever they want to do and are strong enough actually to do. Sin, he continues, is never abstract or academic; it is tragically personal and human. It is not a static something or other; it is truly demonic in nature. It preys on persons and personal relationships, on values and virtues. And of its appetite there is no end. Sin is the perfect answer to a conundrum that used to be circulated in the rural school I attended as a boy. We would say. "I'm thinking of something: the more it eats the more it wants." The answer we sought and usually got was "the threshing machine," but the Psalmist would have given a different answer: "sin" or "iniquity."

Subsequent thinkers in our religious tradition have been in complete agreement with the Psalmist's judgment on sin. Calling it, as he did, woeful disobedience to God, they both enlarged upon its many forms in life and conjured up vivid pictures of the various kinds of punishment in store for various kinds of sin. We may discount the details of Dante's *Inferno* if we will — and

none can say us nay as we do it—but we dare not discredit either the reality of sin or the inevitability of punishment of some sort for it. "Why not?" you ask. And the reply can be brief: *Our soul is at stake.*

This view of the gravity of sin is coextensive with the Christian faith. From Paul's day to our own, it has been a fixed point of reference in the thought of every religious thinker. Martin Luther quotes with complete approval an early Latin churchman's clear picture of the ruin sin makes in life: "The spirit of man is compassed about and besieged by the assaults of the devil and can hardly meet, hardly withstand them all. If avarice is overthrown, lust rises; if lust is put down, ambition takes its place; if ambition is displaced, then anger grows bitter, pride puffs itself up, drunkenness assails, hatred breaks the bonds of concord, envy destroys friendship. . . ."

John Calvin was equally gloomy about the dynamic nature of iniquity: "Infidelity opened the gates to ambition, and ambition produced obstinacy, so that they cast off the fear of God and precipitated themselves whithersoever they were led by their lawless desires . . . Man has not only been ensnared by the inferior appetites, but abominable impiety has seized the very citadel of his mind, and pride has penetrated into the inmost recess of his heart." Study that picture of man's plight, and you will appreciate Dr. Paul Scherer's remark, "Calvin couldn't stop sin, but he could take all of the fun out of it."

II

Biblical and later religious writers are not alone in their perception of this insatiable appetite of iniquity. The great Greek tragedians had an almost terrifying sense of the implacable reality of it and the punishments that attend it. They personified it as "the Furies" who harassed the sinner to the point of death and even beyond death as he sought and was denied the peace of the Elysian Fields. Small wonder, then, that Sophocles closed his greatest play, *Oedipus, King of Thebes,* with the somber warning:

> Therefore, O man, beware, and look
> toward the end of things that be,
> The last of sights, the last of days; and
> no man's life account as gain
> Ere the full tale be finished and the
> darkness find him without pain.

Shakespeare was a past master at depicting the relentless growth of evil in the life of a man until it literally took possession of him. List his heroes: Othello, Macbeth, Hamlet, Caesar, Brutus, and Mark Antony and in every case you can trace the swift corruption of mind, motive and relationships which builds toward the tragic climax of each play.

In our own time Eugene O'Neill has been peculiarly sensitive to the same tragic reality in human life. A student of his dramas once observed that, for O'Neill, the quest was always for God. This, I am sure, is true—and the reason why God is the ultimate goal of his quest is the keen perception which he shares with the Psalmist that without God, life is engulfed in wickedness.

No novelist has dipped so deeply into the malignant meaning of evil in human life as has Dostoevsky. All of his novels have this as a characteristic motif. He is appallingly specific about the circumstances under which it takes root in one's life: atheism agnosticism and skepticism. Let a man find himself in a situation in which he has lost the inner spiritual guards of faith — and his soul is forfeit forthwith. Sin and evil move in and take over, and he is hurled to an awful fate. The only possible way to break the power of evil is through the recommitment of one's self to God, thereby finding the spiritual strength to resist evil successfully.

It is idle to hope to add much, if anything of consequence to these master-draftsmen of the workings of the human spirit when caught in the throes of iniquity, but I would like to single out for special attention one fact that they all assume or imply. The final movement in the expansion of the appetite of iniquity is this: Sin wants to pass for righteousness; vice masquerades as virtue; the devil lusts for sainthood! Actually, of course, this represents the ultimate triumph open to evil — to be mistaken for good. Every sin that corrupts life tries to do that very thing. Thus Milton has his Satan cry out, "Evil, be thou my good!"

III

Manifestly, so great an array of novelists, dramatists, poets and seers would not concern themselves with the ravages of iniquity in life if it were not a universal fact and problem. We are, then, justified in asserting that iniquity is an ever present personal fact, that no man can escape it, that every man must learn to cope with it.

It was Jesus himself who saw that no man is good enough to be called or to be regarded or to feel himself as completely good. When someone addressed him as "Good Master" Jesus interrupted, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one — even

od." He never by so much as one word let s disciples think that they were beyond ıe contagion of iniquity. He knew and said ıd bequeathed to his Church the keen vareness that the seeds of evil and cor- ıption lie deep within the lives of all and e always trying to break through into the ınlight of approval and opportunity to ow and bear their tragic fruit in life.

We do not need to stir out of our own mpany this morning to document this an- ent Christian claim. It will take a longer ieet of paper than the mind of men can nceive to record the evil that good men ave done and continue to do in the name goodness!

The Jews who stoned the prophets were od men; that is, men who believed that protecting the status quo they were doing ıe works of good men. The men who were for stoning the woman taken in adul- ry were the very custodians of the codes high personal and social morality—codes ey were sworn to defend with their own es. When Saul of Tarsus assisted the lf-same custodians of traditional religion killing Stephen, both he and they felt ıat they were good men and had done a od day's work. Cotton Mather, New Eng- nd divine in early Colonial days, was a od man by any fair standard of measure- ent, yet for hardness of heart and merci- ss probity of spirit he had few equals. ven those who acclaimed him a good man ted to have him around because the milk human kindness had never been a part his diet. When Herman Hagedorn wrote s tremendous poem, *The Bomb That Fell America*, he cast most of it in terms of dialogue between God and the one who ied:

I'm a good man, Lord! . . .
I'm one of your troopers . . . Lord, I've
been fighting your battles
For years and years, a lifetime, in fact,
you might say.
On the side of the angels, I put it, al-
ways on the side of the angels.

I am not making fun of these people. They re all good people whose goodness had ne sour. And the souring process is pret- much the same in every case. They were oud of their goodness; they gloried in it; ey were not above boasting about it; they en measured other people against it in der to determine their worth. In so do- g, they let loose in their lives the sin of ide. Whatever else pride does, it blinds a an to the worth of everything at variance th what he holds to be good; it nurtures a kind of self-righteousness that makes ra- tionalizations easy and easy to believe. Un- rebuked by a humility born of an awareness of the greatness, the glory and the mercy of God, pride takes over the reins of a man's life and drives him to his own ruin. No truer line was ever penned than this: "Pride goeth before a fall."

This corruption of goodness, whether through pride of lust or greed, is so close to each one of us, so human, so unavoid- able! It can and it will happen in some measure to everyone here. We may not be as obvious as was the Kansas farmer whose holdings were enormous, but who, when ac- cused of being greedy, answered, "I'm not greedy. I just want all the land that joins mine." Without realizing it, he touched off the temptation that lies at the heart of what Justice Brandeis was fond of calling "the danger of bigness" in modern industry. Jus- tice Brandeis objected to monopolies of every kind whether the closed shop for la- bor or great business aggregates that sti- fle competition. When he spoke of "the ty- ranny of capital" industrialists called him a socialist; when he spoke of the "tyranny of labor" labor leaders called him a tool of capitalism. But he is better regarded as a sincere social prophet who knew the reality and power of the appetite of iniquity in hu- man life. In case after case he hammered home the truth that the desire to own every- thing that joins yours contains the seeds of an evil that for all its good fruits along the way will finally shower the bitter fruits of tragedy on men and social orders.

All of which appears to confirm Carlyle's notoriously dim view of human nature. Many of you will recall his belief that if you think you can make a poor bootblack happy by giving him *things* you are doomed to disap- pointment. Give him half the world, and he will grieve himself to death because he doesn't have the other half! The desire for possession is both good and normal, but couple it with the conviction that you are answerable to yourself alone—not to God; not even to other men—and it suddenly be- comes the evil of greed or avarice or cov- etousness. And, as Carlyle saw, there is no satisfying the appetite of that iniquity.

And let us never forget that an evil on the loose in life never confesses its true na- ture; it always masquerades as good. Preju- dice—racial prejudice—is an excellent exam- ple of how this operates. It begins with the fact of differences between and among races. Whether these differences are relative or absolute is irrelevant for the moment. It proceeds with the fact that as a rule racial

groups prefer to live together—at least, that is the history of mankind to date. It calls attention to various differences in culture, education and ability, which are thought to exist among racial groups. It points out that a social order ought to make provision for these differences and preferences in its conventions, laws and zoning ordinances. It calls this line of reasoning realistic and argues that it serves the best interests of all.

This, of course, is a very genial presentation of the bitter fact of prejudice. If you want it translated into realistic terms, you must talk about certain tendencies in Evanston; you must talk about Cicero and South Africa. Whenever prejudice presents itself as good custom and stable convention, know it for a fact that iniquity is parading in the garments of holiness, and may even have persuaded itself that it is holy.

We live at a time when still another evil is threatening to take over the lives of a great many of us. You can call it by many names. The one that seems to me to be truest to its nature is simply *"passion"*—in one of several concrete forms. Note two of these—hatred and sexual license. Both are uncriticized and uncontrolled products of normal human passions. Each roots in something that is good, yet which, in full flower, showers tragedy and ruin on all.

Hatred of another country, say, springs basically from love of one's own and fear for her welfare and future. We love her so much that we love her too much. We set her above other countries; we not only desire her welfare, we desire it more than the welfare of others. And this state of mind always winds up with us desiring her welfare above and beyond the welfare of anyone else and, if need be, at the expense of other countries. Having no view of the human family that is comprehensive and compassionate enough to see all men as essential and integral parts of it, we begin by loving our country and end by hating every other country that seems to be at variance with or standing in the way of what we want to do for her.

Oh, we seldom put it just that way, do we? We rationalize it beautifully, and when we are through, the appetite of iniquity has been enlarged to the point that evil appears as a good, and we have made the worse appear the better cause.

Sexual license or the uncriticized and uncontrolled gratification of the sexual interest and instinct in life follows the same general pattern. No one suddenly says, "Go to, now. I am going to have a sex instinct." You and everyone else is born with that. Seen as an essential part of one's life bu not the whole of it, treasured as a healthy factor in the unfoldment of one's life an relationships, it is good in every sense o that term. But let it get out of control o this over-all picture of its proper place i life, and it rapidly takes over as the dom inant factor in living. When that happens you get a stream of lurid sexy pictures books and plays that both spring from an pander to sexual license or the sex instinc on the loose. Sex instincts, pleasures and act become ends in themselves and develop cult that accept them as the great goods of life D. H. Lawrence may well be regarded a the High Priest of the Cult of Sexual Li cense that has been attracting and con tinues to attract so many devotees to it orgiastic rites. Read his novels, *Sons an Lovers* or *Lady Chatterly's Lover,* and yo get a serious, studious presentation of th case of sexual license as the most importan thing in the world. But open any daily pa per with its headlines of rape and perver sion, and you get some of the grim result of this preachment let loose in life. We hav not yet found any way to nurture a norma human personality or to create stable par ents unless we keep the sex instinct unde the higher loyalty of what life can an ought to mean.

IV

Nor is this lesson about the appetite o iniquity confined to the evils that bedevil in dividuals. Every institution as well as ever person must face it in some form or othe

The Christian Church is not above th ravages of this appetite of iniquity. Exam ples of it exist in embarrassing profusion One of the clearest was constructed by th genius of Dostoevsky in one section of hi novel, *Crime and Punishment.* I am refer ring to the famous section in which th central figure is the Grand Inquisitor. Th setting is in Spain at the time when Europ was writhing under the Inquisition. Th purpose of the Inquisition was good; namely to protect the Church from heresy. But a bigoted minds and cruel spirits got posses sion of the machinery of the Inquisition, became the noose that sought to strangl the freedoms of Europe in every area of life Devoted to the Church, the Inquisitio would admit no change or criticism withi the Church. It insisted upon the sanctity o the Church and demanded unqualified con formity to her edicts. One of the men haile before the Grand Inquisitor as a dangerou influence to the Church was Jesus Chri who had returned to earth to see how th

ith he planted was faring. What a con-rsation ensues, as visualized by the nov-ist! We need to read it again and again -especially when we get complacent about ır church and critical of any and every ove to change it! The irony of one con-pt of churchmanship comes to its perfect imax when the Grand Inquisitor orders e execution of Jesus as an enemy of the ue Faith as found in the Christian Church! That, surely, is the appetite of iniquity t loose in the Church — and it can get ose in every church! When the Church be-mes an end in herself rather than being humble servant of the Word of God—atch out! When she throws up ramparts ound creedal, ecclesiastical and liturgical rms—be on your guard! When she is so tent upon saving her life that she forgets lose it—crucifixions are on their way! hen she refuses to exalt the Kingdom of od above the kingdoms of this world and fearful about bringing the kingdoms of is earth under the judgment of the King-m of God—she may be many things, but e is no longer the Church of God. Iniquity th eaten her up; she is wholly consumed. Though men may praise her as "doing her duty," as being "the bulwark of our way of life"—the angels round about God's throne weep bitter tears because Calvary was for nought and the tragedy of the Crucifixion must be enacted again.

Who of us seeing this happen—feeling it happen deep within us—can help echoing Satan's wretched cry, "Myself am hell!"

Indulgence in iniquity in any form is the most dangerous practice anyone can get into—whether a person or an institution. The only safeguard against it is to learn how to live humbly and in a spirit of complete commitment to the will of the Good God who is above all and in all. Our good is never good enough; our virtue is never virtuous enough; our piety is never pure enough to enable us to be other than humbly prostrate before the God of all. To know this, to accept it, to be guided by it day by day throughout our life is to give our answer to an ancient question, "What doth the Lord require of thee but to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

(Continued from page 2)

n undertaken by members of North Kel-nside Church, Glasgow. What the pastor rites represents more than a suggestive uide for local evangelism; it is an inspir-g interpretation of the missionary respon-bilities and opportunities of the Church. specially interesting is the account of the sponse and work of laymen in this min-try. (Harper, 120 pp., $2.)

Of *You Have Met Christ,* the author, Da-d Wesley Soper, says: "This little book eks to dispel the illusion of an ancient, ad Christ—to enable modern men and omen to feel the impact of Christ's con-mporary presence, the direct and immedi-e demand of reality, not in lofty abstrac-on but in daily practical existence." There e three areas where Christ can be met: e self, the state and the Church. In each ea, the author shows, there are possibili-es for Christian living, witness and ful-llment. The book has a certain cleverness approach, winsomeness in expression, and rsuasive inspirational tone that makes it ppealing, especially for laymen. (Westmin-er, 142 pp., $2.50.)

The Gospel of Mark and *The Acts of the* postles, both by William Barclay, are vol-umes in The Daily Study Bible Series. Both books are excellent sources for pastors. The day-by-day study of Bible verses offers a biblical interpretation that embraces exegesis that is clear and scholarly with a commentary that is suggestive and devotional. The books will add light and substance to sermons on texts from Mark and Acts. (Westminster, $2.50 each.)

The Hymnody of the Christian Church by Louis F. Benson, first published a generation ago, has now been released in a new edition. The book deserves the attention now that it gained before, for this is a fascinating and comprehensive study of the history, biblical and literary relationships, texts and contents, and singing of hymns. The book is a golden casement opening to a greater appreciation of hymnody. (John Knox, 310 pp., $4.50.)

Private Devotions for Home and Church by John Joseph Stoudt is unusual in content and form. The author, a college teacher and Evangelical and Reformed pastor, has translated a wealth of devotional materials from Dutch, Hugenot, German, Hungarian, English, Scotch and Swiss hymnals and prayerbooks that date from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. (Christian Education Press, 173 pp., $3).

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The Sacrament of Hospitality

In his fascinating book, *The Syrian Christ,* Abraham Rihbany describes the customs of the land in which Jesus lived. He tells about the things in the Gospel, such as the Last Supper, from his own experience of that type of meal and what it means in the social customs of the land. He says this very interesting thing, that Jesus made sacred the common and ordinary customs of the daily life of the people among whom he lived.

The Last Supper is a very interesting illustration of this, and I have called it "The Sacrament of Hospitality" because it lays hold upon some ideas in the social life of the people of Palestine that have to do with the matter of hospitality. Today we think of hospitality as a casual or optional thing; you may choose to have guests in, and we say then we are exercising hospitality. But in ancient days, and in a land that was largely a desert land, hospitality meant the difference between life and death! There were not food stores on every corner, or restaurants or hotels, and when a person traveled, either he enjoyed hospitality or he might very well die. Hospitality was a really urgent and pressing and practical matter, for often it was the only provision for shelter or food or drink or protection from wild beasts or bandits.

When I was studying at Drew, Prof. John Paterson used to apply this to the verse in the twenty-third Psalm, that probably gives you a lot of trouble, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." You wonder just what that is about. Prof. Paterson said it might very well be like this—that a person who has created enemies is fleeing for his life. He sees a tent in the distance; if he can but reach that tent and touch the tent peg or the tent rope, according to the custom and sacred law of hospitality he will be safe. He will be entitled to the protection of the person of that tent, and his enemies will not be able to touch him. And then graphically Dr. Paterson described the chase, until the person reached the tent peg and flung himself exhausted on that sacred ground to enjoy the privilege of hospitality. His enemies want to catch him and kill him, but they dare not break that law, so they sit an watch him. Now his host takes care of hin He provides him with food, with drink, wit shelter, with protection, and with rest, an meanwhile his enemies cannot touch hin And so he sits and has his dinner while the glare at him. "Thou preparest a table be fore me in the presence of mine enemies.

Now according to ths custom such hos pitality was obligatory for three days—o we would say a day, a night, and a day– for three days but not longer. So if his ene mies could wait him out for the three days then when he tried to leave, of course the had a good chance of catching him. Th twenty-third Psalm ends on the strong not that "surely goodness and mercy shall fo low me *all* the days of my life"—not jus three days. He will dwell in the house o the Lord forever, and be safe! All the day of our life the hospitality of God will b ours if our trust is put in Him and if w are committed to Him!

Now something of this is gathered up i the Last Supper. Jesus brings his disciple together in a meal, and bread and salt, a Dr. Rihbany points out, are such significan and sacramental things in the life of th Orient. You have probably heard the expres sion that you are not really a friend of person until you have eaten a peck of sal with him. Of course you don't eat a peck o salt by sitting down and taking great spoon fuls of it at one time. Rather, you use a lit tle bit of salt at a time to seasen the food If you have eaten together enough times s that all in all you have eaten a peck of sal together, you may say then you have ce mented a friendship.

When the disciples were invited to si down with Jesus and to eat with Him, the were being invited into His hospitality o bread and salt. He was offering them thes things, and protection and food and nour ishment. More than that there were person al things that were being offered them— prestige, for instance. You recall how Jesu was criticized during his life-time becaus it was said "He eateth with sinners." Nov when he ate with people who were recog nized as social outcasts, as sinners, He wa giving prestige and recognition to thos

ople by eating with them; He was honor- g them, hence the criticism. And so He as doing with his disciples; He was wel- ming them into His hospitality and let- ng them share of His prestige by eating ith them.

Of course, the thing that we remember ost is that it was a sacrament of love. And e affection with which Jesus gathered His sciples together is the really significant ing about the sacrament of hospitality. ll these other things simply point to this -that Jesus loved and cared so much that e wanted them to remember Him. He was ing to die for them. He was including in is love each one that dipped with Him in e dish. They sat on the floor; they had a ightly elevated table; the wooden dishes r the food were on that table ready to are them together, and it was customary dip a kind of cracker into the food—"He at dippeth with me in the dish"—but that as everybody, even Judas—the ones who ere faithful and the one who was faith- ss—but He gave His love, His hospitality to *every*one—everyone had a chance! He knew that Judas would go out into the blackness of night and do his black deed of treachery, but He did not exclude him from His hospitality and He did not exclude him from His love. Rather He asked that God would include in His favor all of His disciples whom He had called. He welcomed them at the Last Supper, and He simply said He knew that one would betray—one to whom He was giving His love, and yet He would not withhold His love.

This is the sacrament of hospitality, and we are included in it. "This do," He said, "in remembrance of me." The remembrance, again, is a Syrian custom. The host would say, "When you are away, hold me in remembrance." So Jesus said, "This do in remembrance of me." They understood, and we understand, what He meant. And so today we gather at the Lord's table at His invitation and He is our host—a glorious privilege, for this is the sacrament of His hospitality. And in love and loyalty we will remember Him!

e That Do Truly and Earnestly Repent

The phrase, "Ye that do truly and ear- stly repent," appears in the invitation of r communion ritual, and while it is not ssible in two or three minutes to discuss ch a profound subject as true and earnest pentance, I want simply to suggest one or o ideas for your meditation.

The other day as I was reading in the ne Hundred Nineteenth Psalm, I came up- two statements which fit into the pat- rn of our thought today. One was this atement: "I have chosen the way of truth," d the other: "I shall observe it with my hole heart." Now if we can combine these ings—intellectual honesty, choosing the ay of truth about ourselves, and moral ear- stness, observing it "with my whole art," we will then be in the way of re- ntance.

Repentance means that you will be hon- t with yourself about your sins. It means at you will be in earnest about yourself d morally concerned about your sins. You ill be sorry for the wrong that you have ne which has hurt the heart of God and hich has marred and defaced His world. very time you sin you put into the stream life something ugly that should not have been there, and would not have been there if you had not put it there. Now if you ever hear a person say, "I am never sorry for anything I have done," or "I never repent," mark it down that there is a person who is psychologically ill. Unless you have the intellectual honesty and moral earnestness and spiritual understanding to say, "I am deeply sorry," about the wrong you have done, then there is something basically and structurally wrong with your life.

As we gather together at the table of our Lord, promising that we do truly and earnestly repent, we say in the presence of God that we are heartily sorry for these our misdoings. The way is cleared for the coming of the love of God and the cleansing and the forgiveness of God. The mercy of God sweeps all past wrong away and sets us on our feet, giving us a new start and new strength to live the Christian life in the Christian way.

Let us this day choose the way of truth, and observe it with our whole heart, and accept the cleansing forgiveness of God who comes with love and understanding, when we repent.

artakers of the Divine Nature

For just a few moments I want to lift up day for our thinking a phrase that appears in the most sacred part of our communion ritual, the prayer of consecration.

The phrase is "partakers of the divine nature."

The thought is simply that as we partake of the elements of the communion, which contribute to our physical strength, so may we also partake of the divine nature which will contribute to our spiritual strength. May we be strong, not only in body, but also in soul.

But the implications of that simple prayer are manifold. That prayer reminds us that we have been made in the image of God, that after God had created the world he saw that it was good, but after He had created man, He pronounced upon His creation, "It is *very* good." There is a sense in which one can never really come to an understanding of the creation story in Genesis and be a pessimist again. The very goodness of God has been written into the structure of life and the universe, and into the nature of man. We dare to pray that *we* may be partakers of the divine nature, for this very prayer reflects the promises of God Himself.

Now what does it mean to be a partake of the divine nature? It may mean some thing very somber indeed, for when Go most fully revealed Himself, it was upo a cross. He revealed that His compassio means that He will walk the way of love' agony in order to redeem and save. To par take of the divine nature means for you t have a heart so full of love, that you wil do that, too. You will be a partaker of th fellowship of suffering.

But beyond that, our God is one in whos hand there rests the victory of all that i worthful and good. The dominant note o His character is the triumph of the good We may share that victory, too, when w are partakers of the divine nature. Go lived the life of a man, that man might liv the life of God. And because He was abl to take upon Himself the flesh of man i the form of a servant, we are able to b exalted and to be like Him, both in His suf fering and in His triumph.

Today, let us pray that we may be par takers of the divine nature!

Make your Humble Confession

Our theme today is a phrase that occurs in the Communion ritual, "Make your hum ble confession to Almighty God." It is not possible to say much about a theme as tremendous as this in two or three moments, but I do want to present to you a picture that we have in the Bible, a contrast to stir our thinking.

It is a picture of two men going up to the temple to pray. The one man congratulates himself on what he has done for God; the other is humbled by the thought of what God can do for him. The man who is congratulating himself is quite just; he is enumerating the things that he has done that are good. No one can deny that he has done good things; and yet there is something wrong. Somehow there does not seem to be a real channel of communication between him and God. In fact, one wonders if he needs God at all. At the best he seems to be saying to God, "If you want to look at a good and highly respectable person, look this way, while I recount the many good things I have done this week." Obviously there is no humility in his attitude; there is, rather, the stuffy pride which is one of the great enemies of true religion. It constitutes a barrier between us and God. It obscures our real need of God. Unless you can find the way of humble access, you will not really find God.

Now the other man is not a man to hold up as a model, by any means. He is a ma who has done wrong, and knows it. He is man who has fallen below the level of re spectability and is well aware of it. Bu out of his broken heart and contrite spiri he cries to God, and that cry of the huma heart to God is at the center of all true re ligion. It is the kind of faith that you hav when you are humble. I take it that wha we want in this community is to find th way of humility that clears the avenues t God, without moral waste. We do not for moment advocate that a person has to g through the morally unhinging experience of life in order to realize that he needs Go But rather, without that moral waste, le us learn in humility to confess to God th thing that is wrong with our life. Let u make our humble confession that we nee Him, we need His mercy, and we need Hi love!

Jesus told this story about the pharise and the Publican, and it is perfectly clea what He thought about it. The real praye is the prayer of the Publican, the praye of humility, the heart-broken sob of th man who, terribly implicated in his ow wrongfulness, cried out for help—"Lor be merciful to me a sinner."

I do not think there is anybody who is s good that he does not need to make tha his own personal prayer. Today, will *yo* make *your* humble confession?

COMMUNION PRAYER

We ask that Thy blessing may be upon ch of us on this sacred day, set apart at our souls may be strengthened for loyal vice to Thee. May Thy blessing truly be on our minds and hearts and spirits, that y may wake and grow because of Thy ich. Wilt Thou bless this time of wor- p, that we may emerge from this expe- nce of communion feeling ourselves in- rdly strengthened and refreshed, and ady to move out into the world of an- ner week.

We thank Thee for all the privileges of y grace, for the way in which Thou hast us out of the experience of evil into experience of good. Above all, we thank ee that Thou hast been to us a Friend, a erator, a Guide, an Ever-present Help, that we can always trust Thy mercy, low Thy leading, and depend upon Thy th.

We pray that the riches of the gospel that have been made known to us may be known to all men. We pray that the experience that we have had of Thy grace and goodness and love, and the joy of the great liberation through Jesus Christ, may be spread all about this earth. We pray for the peoples of this world. Thou hast meant them for Thyself. Wilt Thou gather them into Thy fold and into Thy truth. Wilt Thou give the secrets of a permanent peace into the minds and hearts of men. Wilt Thou supplant the crass and the self-righteous and self-conscious counsel of men with a deep yearning for loyalty to Thy truth and to Thy will. So wilt Thou establish, through the ways of understanding and good will and justice, Thy kind of world. We pray this day for all who are victims of man's inhumanity to man. We would open our hearts generously to help.

Wilt Thou be with Thy people everywhere and keep them in Thy light, for we ask it in the name of Christ. Amen.

WORTH QUOTING

(Continued from page 2)

t men, having ears, can fail to hear . . . is the truth and insists that he should received as the truth, and yet in know- him as the truth we discover that he is ater than our minds.—Daniel Jenkins in *lieving in God.*

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The thing that makes the story of Jonah interesting . . . is . . . the fact that Jonah nself apparently never did fully believe at God told him! The punishment with ich God had threatened Ninevah was a lent destruction by fire. But, in Old Tes- nent prophecies or preachings, there is ays an "if" attached! if you do so-and- something will happen! In this case it s if you don't turn to God and repent, you l be destroyed.

But poor Jonah, all he could understand the message was the super-spectacle, the truction of Ninevah! What did he do? He lt himself a nice little hut on the side of earby hill, where he could have a sort of gside seat to watch the coming destruc- n! And when God didn't destroy the peo- —why should He, they had changed — ah sat in his hut pouting like a spoiled ld.

My reason for liking this story . . . is that ink it shows that God can and does work only through plain, ordinary people, but netimes through those who are downright stupid in their behavior!—William H. Hunter in *God and You* (Revell).

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The prophets saw with utter clarity the persistent fact of sin, and saw it not as maladjustment or even as failure to "hit the mark" of some objective human standard, but as sin against God. It was rebellion against God and disloyalty to God that made the self-centered luxury of the rich, the exploitation of the poor, bribery, drunkenness, and harlotry such evils . . . This conviction was the basis of both prophetic judgment and the message of hope. The God who could not countenance sin would not save from destruction even his chosen people who persisted in sin. But neither could the God of mercy abandon his people to their sins. A remnant would return; the Messiah would be sent; the Kingdom would come. Although one reads in the prohpets page after page of denunciation and promised doom, it was never the prophets' last word, for it was not God's last word. Those prophets . . . of today who . . . have a clear and powerful sense of sin would do well to accent as much the prophetic note of hope through the grace of God.—Georgia Harkness in *Christian Ethics* (Abingdon).

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Children are natural mimics—they act like their parents in spite of every attempt to teach them good manners.

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Basically you cannot teach art. You can only take out of the man what you suppose

is in the man. You cannot give him a soul. He brings something to you which you must cultivate, though occasionally somebody comes along whom you immediately recognize as an original talent. I make a student creative if he is born creative. No, there are no amateurs in my school—and people with conventional minds would not stay around long.—Hans Hofman, painter, in *Newsweek.*

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The teacher is like the candle, which lights others in consuming itself.—Italian proverb.

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We can never escape from people; and we will never cease having experiences. The art of truly successful living is to mix the people and the experiences which make up our individual lives in such fashion that they produce the greatest possible harvest of happiness, for ourselves and for those around us.

The surest way I know to do this is by giving ourselves away, not just as a hobby —though there is no possible objection to starting it on a hobby basis—but as a day-in-day-out way of life . . .

At times it will require all the kindliness, understanding and tolerance we can muster, and a firm determination not to be discouraged by the occasional repulses we will suffer or the times when our giving will be met with suspicion or cynicism. But if we persist in sowing seeds of friendliness, helpfulness and good will all along the way, we will find ourselves traveling a Happy Road in the company of a host of wonderful friends, and hugely enjoying life in spite of its troubles and vicissitudes.—David Dunn in *Try Giving Yourself Away* (Prentice-Hall).

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Your giving-away will, of course, have to be done in your own individual way, based on the things you have to give.

Fortunately each of us has a different assortment of gifts, so there could never be anything standardized about giving-away . . . Some of us have spare time; others have surplus mental or physical energy; others have a special art, skill or talent; still others have ideas, imagination, the ability to organize, the gift of leadership.

All of us can give appreciation, kindness, interest, loyalty, understanding, encouragement, tolerance—and a score of other little portions of ourselves. Each of us should "major" in the items in which we are "long," and fill in with the others—David Dunn.

He gives nothing who does not give him self.—French proverb.

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It is not the shilling I give you tha counts, but the warmth that it carries wit it from my hand.—Miguel de Unamuno.

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Give what you have. To someone, it ma be better than you dare to think—Longfe low.

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Some years ago I heard the labor exper Whiting Williams, tell of a little squad c day laborers who were hired one mornin and put to work by a taciturn ground fore man. He set them to digging holes som three feet deep. When a hole was finishe it was inspected and the workmen ordere to fill it up and to come to another point an to dig another hole of the same depth. Thi went on for most of the morning and finall the foreman noted the group talking in huddle and then their spokesman came ove and said sullenly, "We're gonna quit. Yo give us our money. You ain't gonna mak damn fools out of us!" The foreman's eye narrowed, and then understanding brok over him, and he said quietly, "Can't you se we're trying to find where the broken pip is." "Oh," said the man, and after a hurrie word with the other workers, he returne and said, "Where you want us to dig next? —Douglas V. Steere in *Work and Contem plation* (Harper).

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The leaven that is afraid to get lost i the lump will get lost in its cellophan wrapped, self-imposed isolation.—Ganse Li tle.

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I believe business is meant to be a chan nel of God's power, the main and chief ex tension of the church in the world . . . Th spiritual opportunity that confronts a ma in any kind of job . . . is unlimited, if h has the imagination to see it, and the cou age to grasp it.—Samuel M. Shoemaker.

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Happiness is a perishable fruit, whic must be used each day, for it will not kee —E. L. Benedic

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Labor and trouble one can always g through alone, but it takes two to be gla —Ibse

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Success is a journey, not a destinatio Happiness is to be found along the way, n at the end of the road—for then the jou

y is over and it is too late. The time for ppiness is today, not tomorrow.

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We permit too many opportunities for ppiness to slip by us because we labor nder the delusion that we shall be happy—
When we arrive at a certain destination;
When we can be with a certain person in a certain place;
When our schooling is finished;
When we get a better job;
When we arrive at a certain income;
When we are married;
When the baby is born;
When we recover from our illness;
When our bills are all paid;
When we own a new car;
When we move into a new home;
When some disagreeable task is finished;
When we are free from some encumbrance.

Doubtless we shall be somewhat happier WHEN—but not as much happier as we think. Life has a way of presenting new complications, and conjuring up new wants, as fast as old ones are satisfied.—David Dunn in *Try Giving Yourself Away* (Prentice-Hall).

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Ye may go forth in search of happiness, but to find it ye must return.